

A

# REVIEW OF THE STATE OF THE ENGLISH NATION.

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Thursday, January 31. 1706.

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THE last Review had ended the Present Subject, had I not seen some Necessity, of Examining this Case of the Death of Her Late Majesty, the Queen Dowager, as it relates to Trade; and had not some of the Unhappy Consequences of it, already begun to appear among us.

I cannot but be persuaded, that if some Person would rightly Represent this Matter to the Queen, Her Majesty has always had such a Solicitous Care of all her Peoples Prosperity, and particularly so tender a Regard and Compassion for the Poor, that it could not be otherwise, but it would move a Concern in her Royal Breast, for the Approaching Miseries of so considerable a Number, of the Trading Industrious part of the People.

Were the Concern of Families Represented to Her Majesty; how if a Mourning should follow the Death of this Prince; they shall be quite out of Prospect of Bread for another Summer; how it comes upon them, just at the beginning of a Spring Trade, and could Her Majesty hear the Complaints of Families, Numerous in Children, Industrious in Labour, but entirely Depending upon the Weaving or Working the several Manufactures, that would be Crush'd by such an Accident; what Terrors they are in, for fear of Starving and Distreis; could Her Majesty be made Sensible, of what Extremities they have Suffer'd for some Years past, by this very Matter, I am Confident it would move her, to put some immediate stop, to such a Growing Mischief in Trade.

It

It cannot but appear a Valuable thing to Her Majesty, to have it in her Power by the Breath of her Mouth, or by the easie Regulation of the Household, and Her Majesty's own Servants, to be able at once, to Starve or Relieve 100000 Families of her People.

That when I talk at that Extensive Rate, I speak very much within Compafs, I am free to Appeal to any Man of Judgement, in the Variety and Numbers of the Trades, and the Poor depending upon them, which are Influenc'd by this Unhappy Case, and it would be endless to give a List of them.

And yet after all, I cannot see one Tradef-men of any Consideration, that Claims to be better'd by it; I have indeed heard some People Talk, and *Ignorantly enough too*, that it Promotes the Wearing of Black Cloth, and yet Universally the Woollen-Drapers are Undone by it, and all join in the Complaint; not a Trade of any Note, to Petition against the Regulating it; not any body to Alledge the Numbers of Poor, that are Employ'd in any thing worn by Mourning, to Confront with Spittle-Fields, and the Innumerable Throng of Poor that stand still, and are in Danger of being Ruin'd by it.

In short, 'tis the Cry of the whole Nation; and if it were needful to try, there would be found very few of the Manufacturing Towns in the Kingdom, but what would join Sincerely in an Address, and besiege Her Majesty with their Humble Entreaties, at least to shorten and ascertain the Times of Publick Mournings; so that they might not spread out of her Royal Pallace, or at least so, as they might not affect the General Mode and Habits of the People; left in Time, the several Trades be wholly Destroy'd, the Employers Crush'd, and the Poor Miserably Distress'd, Scatter'd, and Driven to all manner of Miseries and Extremities. —

I have heard indeed, ~~some~~ Modern Politicians say, our Poor are not reduc'd enough, that the want of Soldiers and Seamen is so great, and of such Consequence to the Nation, that it is necessary to re-

duce the Poor People to some Extremities, that they may with more Freedom, enter into the Publick Service, in the Navy and Army; and for this they bring an Instance of the French, the Poverty of whose People fills their Armies upon such easie Terms, and makes their King so invincible.

I commend this Practice to our Enemies with all my Heart, but I had much rather see our own Countrymen all too Rich to Lift, than too Poor to Live.

May our Wealth Enable us to hire Poorer Nations to Fight for us, rather than that Desperate Method of Impoverishing the Nation to raise Soldiers, should be put in Practice here; this would be *sinking the Ship to Drown the Rats*, burning the House to Kill the Bugs; and bringing in the Plague, to Cure the Small Pox; there are a Thousand ways to raise Men, without Reducing the Nation, and perhaps in that Case, it only wants to have some body ~~hand~~, that could propose better Methods than any yet taken to bring it to pass. But to the Case in hand.

If you Reduce the People to Poverty, and the Miseries and Distresses of Families force the Men into the Army and Navy, to be out of the View of their Melancholy Houses, and the Cries of their Starving Innocent Children; What will you do with the Poor Helpless Families that are left behind? — Do with them! Says my Politick Captain, that wants Soldiers; Why, the Government must find some way to help them; very well, Gentlemen, now you hit the Case exactly; now do but find out some way, how either by Deductions of Pay, Anticipation of Wages, National Bounty, or any other Fund, the Families of such as Serve in the Navy and Armies, shall receive from the Publick some certain Subsistence, during the Absence of their Husbands, Fathers, and Relations; and you might soon Supply the Publick Service with Men enough both for Sea and Land Service.

But to Ruine our Trade to raise Soldiers, is the direct way to have an Army, and nothing to Pay them with, which is the Case

of some of our Neighbours; and is indeed one of the shortest ways to make an end of the War.

Upon the Whole, it is my opinion, That this Case of Publick Mourning is a Grievance which wants nothing towards its Remedy, but to be rightly laid before her Majesty, whose General Care and Concern for Trade, for the Encouragement of the Industry and Labours of the Poor, is such, That being but duly appris'd of the fatal Consequences of these things to the Publick, their rendring Trade precarious to the Rich, and desperate to the Poor, and their direct Tendency to a general Decay of Trade, Impoverishment and Discouragement of the Industrious; it cannot fail of a suited Application and Redress.

The Petition is short, the Redress easy; and 'tis but a Trifle will answer all the Requests of the People, and put a stop to the Fears and Clamours of the Uneasy Traders; only that her Majesty will be pleas'd to direct that the State-Mournings, to which by the Debt of Ceremony all Courts are oblig'd, may not extend without her own Walls, and that the Household being prescrib'd to short Mournings, the Example may not influence those, that, attending at Court, think themselves oblig'd to Dress by their Pattern, and so spread the Habit, 'till it becomes a Nuisance in Trade, a Ruine to the Shopkeepers, and fatal to the Poor.

As to this Regulation being distasteful at Foreign Courts, 'tis an Objection not worth making, much less answering an Equality of Behaviour to one Court with another, is a general Answer to it: No Court objects against what is a Custom or Standing Rule of a Country, even at Rome, the greatest Court of Nicety and Ceremony in the World; no Ambassador Objects against his Reception, let it be in what manner it will, provided it be the express standing Order of the Court, and observ'd to other Princes of equal Dignity with his Master; and innumerable Examples are to be given of this.

The Practice also of Foreign Princes have been before us in this Case, particularly in France, where by an Edict of the

King, and for the very same Reasons as are now alledg'd with us, viz. the Injury to Trade, the People were prohibited to go into Mourning upon any occasion for above such a certain time.

It can therefore no longer be doubted, but if due Application be made to her Majesty, and the just Request of the Subjects duly explain'd as to what it is, will relieve and satisfy them; so plain, so easy, so profitable a Request will never be denied.

I could have fetch'd abundance of Examples here from *Foreign Courts*, and shown the Care *Nations Abroad* have taken, to prevent every Encroachment on their Trade; but I could with much more Advantage, look back on the several *Acts of Parliament* pass'd here, in meer Trifles compar'd to this, for the Benefit of the Wollen Manufacture.

Such as the Act for Burying in Woollen, a thing, tho' great in its Prospect, nothing in its Consequences; the several Acts about Buttons and others; but when I come to consider the Weighty Concern of this Custom of Mourning, I wonder that it has not yet been more spoke to, by those that pretend to understand so much of Trade, and be so Concern'd for the Publick Good.

How can we expect the Queen should Relieve Her Subjects, when their Case is not Represented? Her Majesty has always Express'd a Tenderness for her Poorest Subjects, and a Willingness to Redress all their Oppressions, but no Body can expect Relief, that does not think it worth while to make the Pressure known.

We have indeed some People in England, that Love rather to Complain, than be Thankful; that had rather have something to Murmur at, than Apply to the Proper Place for Redress. I confess, a Man would have a Mean Opinion of such Peoples Sufferings, if we did not see Unaccountable Instances of it every Day in Capital Cases.

I will not undertake to Examine, the Philosophical Reasons of it, or whether it be a peculiar to Englishmen or no; but certainly the Error is inexcusable. Here is a manifest

manifest Grievance, Thousands of Families are Ruin'd and Undone by it; Trade Languishes, the Shop Keepers Decay, the Employers stand still, and the Poor Starve; and upon the whole Matter, it appears it is in Her Majesty's Breast to Relieve you, and Rectifie all this Evill at once; the Breath of her Mouth will restore Trade, and turn it into its right Channel again; and no Body Applies to Her Majesty for this Relief. Will any Man or Nation Pitty us? Want, and Starving, ought to be the Portion of People, that may have Relief and slight it.

Did ever any Subjects lay their Grievances in Trade before Her Majesty, when it was in her Sole Power to relieve them, and receive a Repulse? Did ever her Majesty show her self uncoucern'd for Trade, or the Poor? Why then should not this Case be humbly, peaceably, and with due Deference and Submission, by proper bands, laid before her Majesty, and her Royal Assistance implor'd in suitable Terms, to move her Majesty to take it into Consideration? Without doubt, till that is done, all Murmurs, Complaijnts and Repinings are Unreasonable, Undutiful, and Insignifiant.

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